

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO PRIORITY

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TAGS: CI, PINT

SUBJECT: PRESS CONFERENCE OF CHILEAN AMBASSADOR

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF REUTER ACCOUNT (FROM WASHINGTON POST) OF AMBASSADOR HEITMANN'S REMARKS AT NATIONAL PRESS CLUB, JANUARY 14.

2. QUOTE: LEFT WING SNIPERS PREVENTED CHILEAN PRESIDENT SALVADOR ALLENDE FROM SURRENDERING TO AN ARMY COUP LAST SEPTEMBER - AND ALLENDE THEN KILLED HIMSELF, CHILE AMBASSADOR WALTER HEITMANN SAID YESTERDAY.

3. QUOTE: HEITMANN TOLD A NEWS CONFERENCE THAT THE SNIPERS, MOSTLY "FOREIGNERS", HAD SET THEMSELVES UP IN BUILDINGS OPPOSITE THE MONEDA PALACE AFTER THE COUP BEGAN SEPT. 11.

4. QUOTE: THEIR GUNFIRE PREVENTED ALLENDE FROM LEAVING THE BUILDING TO TAKE A CAR - PROVIDED BY THE MILITARY - THAT WOULD HAVE TAKEN HIM TO THE AIRPORT AND EXILE.

5. QUOTE: ALLENDE THEN WENT BACK TO HIS OFFICES AND SHOT HIMSELF WITH A MACHINE GUN, REPORTEDLY ONE GIVEN HIM BY CUBA PREMIER FIDEL CASTRO.

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6. QUOTE: AT ONE POINT DURING HIS NEWS CONFERENCE,

HEITMANN SAID THERE WAS A DISCUSSION OF WHETHER ALLENDE HAD SHOT HIMSELF OR HAD BEEN SHOT BY THE MILITARY.

7. QUOTE: "SOME SAY HE WAS SHOT BY THE MILITARY, SOME SAY HE COMMITTED SUICIDE. IT REALLY MAKES NO BIG DIFFERENCE. I DON'T SEE WHAT THE DIFFERENCE IS," HEITMANN SAID.

8. QUOTE: BUT HEITMANN LATER MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT HE REPRESENTS IS CONVINCED THAT ALLENDE KILLED HIMSELF, CITING A DEATH CERTIFICATE AND THE TESTIMONY OF ALLENDE'S PERSONAL PHYSICIAN.

9. QUOTE: THE NEWS CONFERENCE WAS CALLED APPARENTLY BECAUSE THE CHILEAN MILITARY JUNTA IS STILL WRESTLING WITH THE GHOST OF ALLENDE.

10. QUOTE: "HE WAS ONE OF THE BEST SPEECHMAKERS I HAVE EVER MET," HEITMANN SAID. "MANY PEOPLE ARE STILL CONVINCED THAT WHAT ALLENDE WANTED WAS TO ORGANIZE DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM, WITH FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND FREEDOM OF ELECTIONS.

11. QUOTE: "BUT THAT IS WHAT WE DID NOT HAVE. IT WAS TOTALITARIAN MARXISM," HE ADDED.

12. QUOTE: HEITMANN INDICATED THAT THE MILITARY WOULD RETAIN CONTROL OF THE GOVERNMENT AT LEAST UNTIL THE END OF THE YEAR WHEN A NEW CONSTITUTION IS DRAFTED.

13. QUOTE: THE MILITARY WOULD THEN RETURN TO ITS TRADITIONAL, NONPOLITICAL ROLE. SOME CHANGES WITHIN THE CURRENT RULING JUNTA, HEADED BY GEN. AUGUSTO PINOCHET, WOULD PROBABLY TAKE PLACE BEFORE THEN, HE SAID. UNQUOTE.

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